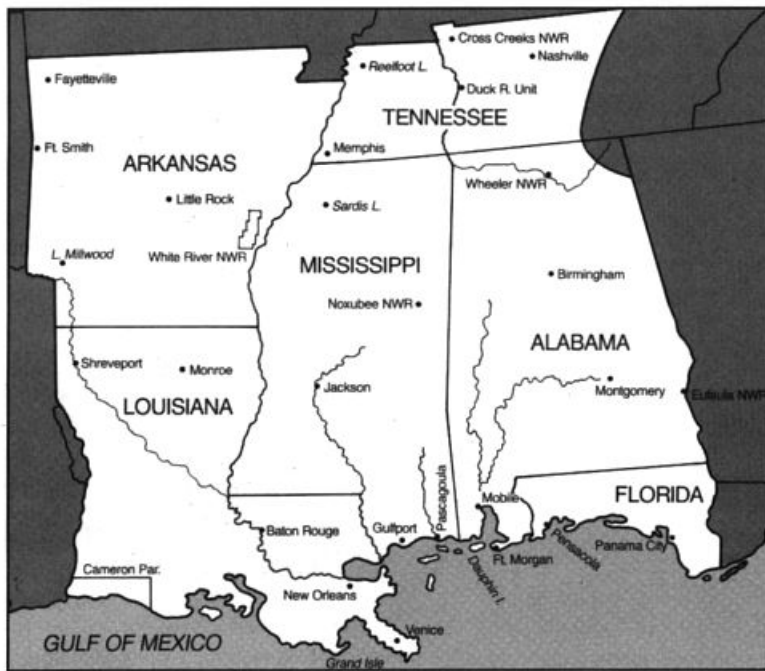


central southern



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We would like to express our gratitude to Steve Cardiff for having served as spring season editor for the Central Southern Region for the last three years and as subregional editor for Louisiana for many more years. His hard work and high standards are greatly appreciated.

Following another mild winter, the spring was generally mild but dry. In parts of the region it was more than dry; the drought in se. Louisiana is perhaps unprecedented in historic times. There were numerous record or near-record early arrival dates. Schiefer reported a three-day deluge in early April that created interesting shorebird records, and there was a good fallout on the Alabama coast with the front of 24 April. There were many interesting vagrants reported, which the various state committees will have to review. We would like to thank Stacy Peterson whose efforts in gathering and forwarding reports from coastal

Mississippi resulted in a great increase in reports from that area.

Abbreviations: EW-826 (Ewing Bank 826 oil platform, 61 mi s. of East Timbalier I., LA); F.W.B.S.F. (Ft. Walton Beach Spray Fields, FL); SP-89 (South Pass 89 oil platform, 50 mi se. of Grand Isle, LA); VE-265 (Vermilion 265 oil platform, 77 mi s. of Pecan I., LA). For records of "review list" species, some documentation has been received, but a statement that a record will be reviewed by committee is no guarantee that any given record will be accepted by that committee.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Red-throated Loons, casual in the Region, were reported in the company of Pacific and Common Loons at *Henry*, TN, 4 Mar (JRW) and *Escambia/Santa Rosa*, FL, 16 Mar–13 Apr (LD, RAD). Other Red-throateds were reported from *Oktibbeha*, MS, 22 Mar (TS, MS) and *Davidson*, TN, 2 May (MLM). Four Eared Grebes were e. in *Shelby*, TN, 26 Mar (DY), as were 4 in *Marion*, AL, 8 Apr (JJ). Another was late for coastal Mississippi 9 May in *Jackson* (*fide* SJP). A well-described **Greater Shearwater** was seen from SP-89 on 16 Mar (KB). A Sooty Shearwater seen from shore at Perdido Key 29 Mar would provide the 10th Alabama record (LD et al.). Reports of two Manx Shearwaters, a species not on the

Louisiana state list, from SP-89 on 8 Mar and 13 May (KB), will have to be adjudicated by committee. The only Audubon's Shearwater report came from EW-826 on 18 May (BMM). A **Leach's Storm-Petrel** was a good find at SP-89 on 12 May (ph. KB). Increased pelagic coverage is showing this species to be rare but regular in the gulf waters off Louisiana. Masked Booby reports were of adults 5 & 21 Apr at EW-826 (BMM) and a sub-adult 29 May at VE-265 (RLK).

Double-crested Cormorants provided one of the few nesting records for Tennessee in *Davidson/Sumter* when two nesting pairs were discovered 13 May (CAS). Thirteen American Bitterns in *Quitman*, MS, 5 Apr, provided a good number for this rarely seen migrant (FB). A pair of Great Egrets 13 May provided the first Nashville breeding record (CAS). *White*, AR, had its first record of Tricolored Heron when one was seen 19 May and 3 Jun (K&LN). After hints of breeding last year, White Ibises were confirmed nesting for the first time in the *Noxubee*, MS, area 23 Apr–31 May (MC, JBe et al.); 160 in *Tallahatchie/Quitman* 12 May (FB) provided a high count for inland Mississippi. Wood Storks reached Alabama in early May, with numbers climbing to 22 in *Hale* 26 May (RRR, EGR). Because none was reported from usual summer locations in Louisiana, can we assume that these individuals were from the Florida location rather than from Mexico?

Seventy Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in *Lafayette*, AR, 4 Mar (L&KN, CM), provided an impressive number for the Region and were early to boot. The species was also reported from inland Mississippi, where accidental, with 3 in *Madison* 17 Apr (ph. KM et al.) and one in *Rankin* 8–9 May (ph. CC et al.). A Tundra Swan, rare throughout the Region, provided a first county record in *Lowndes*, MS, 13 Feb–18 Mar (TS et al.). Reports of 2 Mottled Ducks 11–26 May and 2 American Black Ducks 8–9 Mar at the same location in *White*, AR (K&LN) should provide a cautionary tale for any out-of-range report of either species. The waters were further muddied by the report of a probable Mottled × Mallard hybrid that closely resembled a male Mottled but had the leading edge of the bluish-green speculum bordered by white, as in Mallard (T&MS). Two ad. Blue-winged Teal with 7 young in *Santa Rosa*, FL, 8 May, provided a rare breeding record for nw. Florida (*fide* RAD). Male Cinnamon Teal were reported from *Little River*, AR, 4–25 Mar (CM,

K&LN) and in *Rapides*, LA, 20 Apr (RJB). A Surf Scoter in *Cameron*, LA, 21 May was rare and very late (JPK, DR). A Black Scoter in *Lowndes*, MS, 12 Apr provided the only other scoter record for the season (TS). A male Common Merganser was unusual from Dauphin I. 7 Apr (GEH *et al.*). A count of 930 Ruddy Ducks in *Marshall*, AL, 7 Mar, provided a new maximum for the state (GDJ, DGJ).

HAWKS THROUGH CRANES

Swallow-tailed Kites were widely reported this spring. A report of 30–40 (including 5–7 one-year-olds) feeding over a soybean field came from *St. Tammany*, LA, 1 May (JOC). Continuing confirmation of at least limited trans-gulf migration by the species was provided by reports of 2 seen from EW-826 on 14 Mar (BMM) and one seen from SP-89 on 15 Mar (KB). An early report came from *Mobile*, AL, 8 Mar (JFP). There were several reports from across coastal Mississippi 18 Mar+, with a maximum of 30 from the Pascagoula R. area (JBU, MW). There was also one report of 3 from inland Louisiana 19 Apr in *Rapides* (RJB) and 2 reports of single birds from Arkansas in May (CM).

Cooper's Hawks were reported nesting in urban areas in *Orleans*, LA, (PY) and *Memphis*, TN, (NPM, SHM). A total of 32 Swainson's Hawks was seen 20–30 Apr in *Little River*, AR, with a maximum of 11 on 20 Apr (CM *et al.*), indicating that the species may be a fairly common migrant in small numbers along the Red R. in sw. Arkansas. Another was reported in *Jefferson Davis*, LA, 17 May in an area where breeding has been suspected in recent years (JPK, KE, DC). Much more unusual was a report from *Panola*, MS, 16 Apr (G&SK), providing a first area record. Reports of Prairie Falcon from *Shelby*, TN, provided an unusual record for the Region 4 Apr (VR) and 29 Apr (MGW *et al.*), subject to committee review. A report of 130 Soras from *Jackson*, MS, 13 Apr provided an exceptional number (CDe *et al.*). In a possible echo from last year's northward incursion, two Purple Gallinules appeared in *Little River*, AR, 7 May (CM) and one was in *Noxubee*, MS, 12 May+ (JBe, MC, TS). A report of 1007 Sandhill Cranes from Hop-In W.M.A., TN, 1 Mar was the highest number reported for the refuge (RG). A detailed report of Sandhill sightings from Grand Cote N.W.R. near Cheneyville, LA, showed that the flocks, which peaked at 1100 on 18 Feb, had dwindled to 17 on 1 Mar and departed by 9 Mar (BB).

SHOREBIRDS

The only Snowy Plover reports were from Rutherford Beach, LA, where 5 were seen on both 29 Apr (BMM, PAW, CS) and 13 May (PAW, DPM, RDP). The only Piping Plover report received was of a rather late bird in *Cameron*, LA, 13 May (DPM, RDP, PAW). American Avocets were reported from inland locations in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Approximately 500 seen in *Cameron* 13 May was a good number (RDP, DM, PAW). A count of 1041 Lesser Yellowlegs in *Tallahatchie/Quitman*, MS, 19 Apr (FB) was excellent, but 8000 in *Prairie* 8 Apr was by far the largest concentration ever reported from Arkansas (K&LN). A Solitary Sandpiper in *East Baton Rouge*, LA, 1 Mar was either the bird seen on the Baton Rouge CBC, providing a scarce wintering record for the Region, or an incredibly early migrant (DFL). Forty-two Whimbrels in *Escambia*, FL, 20 Apr provided a new maximum for the area; 27 in *White*, AR, 25 May was by far the largest concentration ever reported in Arkansas (K&LN). Two Hudsonian Godwits in *White* were rare in e. Arkansas 13 & 16 May (K&LN). A count of 40 Marbled Godwits in *Escambia*, FL, 20 Apr provided the new maximum for the area (A&DF). The seacoast of Louisiana continues to be the stronghold for the species, with numbers ≤110 seen 7 Mar–8 Apr in Port Fourchon (PAW, CS *et al.*). Red Knots are unusual away from the coast, so 2 from *Jefferson Davis*, LA, 7 May (PAW, CS) were noteworthy. Inland reports of Sanderling came from *Lake*, TN, with 8 on 12 May and 4 on 27 May (JRW) and from *Little River*, AR, 20 May (CM). A report of a Purple Sandpiper 27 Feb–29 Mar in *Santa Rosa*, FL (LD, RAD *et al.*), was rare for the Region. A count of 2527 Dunlins from the rice country of sw. Louisiana 7 May (CS, PAW) was noteworthy; 7 in *Prairie*, AR, 18 Mar (K&LN) were very early. Difficult to identify in basic plumage, a **Curlew Sandpiper** was well-described in a report from F.W.B.S.F. 12–15 Apr (RAD *et al.*). Pending committee review, this would represent the first record for the panhandle of a species that is casual anywhere in the Region. A report of 52 Buff-breasted Sandpipers from *Little River* provided the largest spring concentration ever for Arkansas (CM). Five Red-necked Phalaropes in breeding plumage, a species generally rare in the Region, were a good find 20 May in *Prairie*, AR (K&LN). An even rarer Red Phalarope in *Shelby* 17 Mar was well-described—it would provide the 19th record for Alabama (DH, HHK, GDJ, DGJ).

LARIDS

Pomarine Jaegers put in an especially good showing this spring, with 56 sightings from SP-89 from 8 Mar–17 May, peaking with 17 on 7 Apr (*vide* KB). Myers had 15 sightings from EW-826 from 9 Mar–18 May (BMM). A total of 7 sightings came from VE-265, with all but one during the week of 21–26 Mar (RLK). Much more unusual were Parasitic Jaegers, with one reported from EW-826 on 3 Apr (BMM) and two from SP-89 on 23 Apr and various other dates (KB). The rarest of all the jaegers in the n. gulf, a sub-adult Long-tailed was reported from *Escambia*, FL, 4 Apr (RAD).

Franklin's Gulls were extremely early and far e. in *Lake*, TN, 27 Feb (JRW) and were even farther east in *Davidson*, TN, 28 Mar (MLM). The gull of the season was a **Little Gull** which stayed at the East Jetty Oxidation Pond in *Cameron*, LA, for less than an hour 29 Apr (BMM, CS, ph. PAW *et al.*). There are fewer than 10 state records. There were 5 reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, all from Louisiana, including 2 from offshore SP-89 from 9–21 Mar (ph. KB) and 5 from *Jefferson* 11 Mar (PY). The only Great Black-backed report came from *Davidson*, TN, 9 Feb–14 Mar (MLM). Rooftop nesting of Gull-billed Terns in suburban *Jefferson*, LA, is increasing, as is clear from a report of 455 seen there 14 May (PY). A report of 200 Common Terns from EW-826 on 8 May indicates that there is some movement of this species across the gulf (BMM). A report of Least Terns 8 Mar from *Harrison*, MS, Sand Beach personnel provided an extraordinary early arrival date (*vide* SJP). A report of five Black Skimmers from EW-826 on 31 Mar (BMM) was unusual for this coastal species, raising the possibility of some migratory movement.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The dove explosion continues. Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported from *Sunflower*, *Bolivar*, *Forrest*, and *Lafayette*, MS, and *Clay* and *White*, AR. In *Pulaski*, 150 were present, the largest concentration to date in Arkansas (TM). White-winged Doves seem certain to be increasing in numbers in Arkansas and spreading across the state from southwest to northeast (H&MP); they were reported from *Little River*, *Faulkner*, *Magnolia*, and *Hot Spring*. Elsewhere, 3 in *Grand Isle* 28 May were possible breeders (PAW, DPM); one in *Hancock*, MS, 9 May (NM, *vide* SJP) was late and one in *Lafayette*, MS, 19–22 Apr (WMD, GK, SK *et al.*) provided a county first. Three Inca Doves in *Little River* (CM)

were suspected of breeding, as were two in Grand Isle 7 Mar–15 Apr (PAW, DPM, CS); one at EW-826 on 22 Apr (BMM) was surprising. The only Common Ground-Dove reported was in Jackson, MS, 14 Apr (CDe, JRP *et al.*). A Black-billed Cuckoo, considered rare inland, was in Shelby, AL, 5 May (HHW, S&DH); one photographed 13 May in Lake, TN, (JRW, MG) subsequently bred. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Elmore, AL, 5 Apr (PR) was early for the inland coastal plain. A Burrowing Owl at VE-265 on 5 Apr (RLK) was unexpected. Short-eared Owls stayed late in Mississippi; 11 were in Tallahatchie 7 Mar (FB); 11 more were in Bolivar 16 Mar (FB); two were in Lowndes 25 Apr (TS, MS). Lesser Nighthawks (pending review) were reported from VE-265, one each 15 Mar and 23 Apr (RLK). A Common Nighthawk in Oktibbeha, MS, 20 Apr (MS) tied the earliest area date.

Two Vaux's Swifts were reported calling and flying overhead at Ft. Pickens, FL, 18 Apr (RAD); this extraordinary sighting will be reviewed by committee. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported from four s. Louisiana parishes 1 Mar and reached Rapides, LA, 2 Mar (RJB). One in Butler, AL, 7 Mar (CK) was early, and one in Oktibbeha 13 Mar (MC *et al.*) was the earliest ever there. A wintering Ruby-throated remained in Iberville, LA, until at least 25 Apr (SWC, DLD). Other lingering hummingbirds included a Black-chinned in Lowndes, MS, through at least 18 Mar (TS m. ob.) and Calliopes in Ascension, LA, 12 Mar (NLN, AG), Iberville 18 Apr (DLD, SWC), and Pensacola 2 Mar (RAD). Broad-tailed Hummingbirds remained until 18 Apr in Iberville (DLD, SWC), 2 May in St. John the Baptist, LA, (GS, *vide* NLN), and 10 May in Harrison, MS, (GM, SJP, JT, m. ob.). Overwintering Rufous Hummingbirds stayed until 23 Mar in Oktibbeha (TS, EW, m. ob.) and until 30 Mar in Yell, AR, (H&MP). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Hancock, MS, 22 Apr (JT, NM, m. ob., *vide* SJP) was considered late.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRUSHES

Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were noteworthy in Jackson, MS, 25 Apr (CDe, AH), Davidson, TN, 10 May (PDC, FCF *et al.*), and Lake, TN, 21 May (ph. JRW, JN). An Acadian Flycatcher in Iberville 31 Mar (DLD) was exceptionally early and one in Noxubee, MS, 19 Apr (TS) tied the earliest area record. Other noteworthy *Empidonax* flycatchers included an Alder in Davidson 11–19 May (RHC, m. ob.), a Willow in

Shelby, TN, 20 May (MTOS), and a Least in Jackson, MS, 25 Apr (CDe, AH *et al.*). A wintering Ash-throated Flycatcher stayed until 5 Apr (RAD) at F.W.B.S.F. A Great-crested Flycatcher in Harrison, MS, 21 Mar was early (JM, *vide* SJP). Two calling **Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds** were reported, both of which were believed to be Tropical. One was in Lafourche, LA, 9 Apr (RDP) and the other was in Santa Rosa, FL, 29 Apr (RAD). A Western Kingbird was at F.W.B.S.F. 29 Apr (RAD, P&BT) and a pair nested in Little River, AR, 14 May+ (CM, K&LN). A Gray Kingbird in Lafourche 18 May (SH) was a good find, and the pair returned to nest in Biloxi 1–31 May (SJP, m. ob.). There were more than a dozen reports of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers from all over the Region. There were nesting records from Alabama and Tennessee, including Lake's first (WGC, ph JRW).

A Bell's Vireo in Baldwin 28 Apr (HH, MiC) furnished Alabama's 4th coastal spring record. In Caddo, LA, Terry Davis found an important breeding area for Bell's Vireo, with 10 present 29 May. A Yellow-throated Vireo in Harrison, MS, 16 Mar (JM, *vide* SJP) was the earliest in over 60 years. Two Warbling Vireos in Lauderdale, AL, 29 Apr were early breeders (JTG). One or two were at Ft. Morgan 24–25 Apr (BS, RAD, LD) and one was at Ft. Pickens 25 Apr (LD, RAD, m. ob.); they are rare in both places. Fifteen Philadelphia Vireos in Caddo 6 May (TD) was a very high count. A total of 8 Black-whiskered Vireos was found in coastal Alabama 3 Apr–15 May. Fish Crows are increasing inland, judging from several records from n. Alabama and w. Tennessee.

A Violet-green Swallow seen 26 Mar at VE-265 (RLK) would be Louisiana's first, subject to committee review. Two Cliff Swallows in Pope 11 Mar (K&LN) were the earliest ever for Arkansas; 40 building nests at Wheeler Dam, AL, 23 Mar were rather early (GDJ, DGJ). Alabama had ≤5 Cave Swallows at Ft. Morgan 4–12 Apr (GDJ, DGJ, LD, m. ob.), at least one in Mobile 4 Apr (GDJ, DGJ), and one at Dauphin I. 16 Apr (SRM). Another was at F.W.B.S.F. 14–15 Apr (M&RR, RAD, m. ob.). A Cave Swallow at the breeding site in Cameron 21 May (JPK, DR) appeared to attempt mating with a Barn Swallow. A Barn Swallow in Montgomery, AL, 9 March was early (LFG). Single Red-breasted Nuthatches in Oktibbeha 2 May (NHu) and Lawrence, AL, 6 May (TMH *et al.*) were late. In Bolivar, MS, Carolina Chickadees were displaced from a nest cavity by Prothonotary Warblers, which placed vegetation over the chickadee eggs and used

the site (NHu). Single Bewick's Wrens were considered rare at F.W.B.S.F. (LD), Davidson, TN, (RHC), and Clay, AR, (GH), all 9 Mar. Bewick's were nesting in Boone (SJG) and Washington (MM) in Arkansas. A Gray-cheeked Thrush in Washington 24 May (MM) was Arkansas' latest ever.

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

There were far too many locally early or late records, especially of warblers, to treat individually. Early records were noted for Blue-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Yellow-throated, Blackpoll, Prairie, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, and Swainson's Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Kentucky, Mourning, and Hooded Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Summer and Scarlet Tanagers. Late records were noted for Blue-winged, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Palm, Yellow-rumped, Blackburnian, and Cerulean Warblers, American Redstart, Worm-eating and Mourning Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager.

A Lawrence's Warbler at Grand Isle 16 Apr (BEF) was a rare find. Usually uncommon, Nashville Warblers were reported from six locations in n. Alabama and n. Mississippi. Cape May Warblers were reported at EW-826 on 21 Apr (BMM) and Montgomery, AL, 30 Apr (LFG). The 114 Yellow-rumped Warblers in Washington, AR, were considered a large number (MM). Black-throated Blue Warblers were considered rare in Jefferson, AL, 28 Apr (LFG) and Davidson, TN, 2 May (PDC, GC); one at SP-89 on 28 May (KB) was also late. A family of Black-throated Green Warblers in Pope, AR, 31 May (JA) provided an unusual breeding record. Pine Warblers nested early in Washington 9 Mar (MM). Cerulean Warblers were widely reported: 6 in Mississippi, 4 in Tennessee, and one in Louisiana. For another species of concern, Swainson's Warbler, there were seven reports from Mississippi, two from Alabama, and two from Arkansas. Two Connecticut Warblers in Madison, AL, 16 May (MSG, CDC *et al.*) were considered rare; there were three reports from Davidson, 12 (PDC, FCK), 13 (CAS), & 22 May (JKS). Five Mourning Warblers were reported from Davidson, 3 from Alabama, and one was at VE-265 on 18 May (RLK).

SPARROWS THROUGH SISKINS

Three American Tree Sparrows in Dyer, TN, 24 Mar (CDa) were presumably late. A Clay-

colored Sparrow at Dauphin I. 22–23 Apr (WJB, m.ob.), one in *Caddo* 21 Apr (TD), and 3 in *Washington*, AR, 9 May (JPr, RD, AJ) were all considered unusual. Single Lark Sparrows 29 Apr (SWC, DLD) and 6 May (JPK, CF) in *Cameron* were unexpected; 8 in *Lauderdale* 22–23 Apr (JTG, m.ob.) and 2 in *Madison*, AL, 6 May (DRC, RC) were probably breeding. A pair in *Lake*, TN, 13 May (JRW, MG) furnished a first county nesting record. A Savannah Sparrow in *Oktibbeha* 22 May (TS) was late. A Grasshopper Sparrow in *Jackson*, MS 14 Apr (JBU, *fide* SJP) was late; 3 in *Marshall*, MS, 30 Apr (GK, SK) were unusual. A late Henslow's Sparrow was in *Jackson* 19 Apr (JBU, *fide* SJP) and one in *Washington*, MS, 19 April (EA) was quite unusual inland. Le Conte's Sparrows were reported from several areas of Mississippi during April. There were 6 reports of Lincoln's Sparrows from e. parts of the Region, where it is uncommon. A Harris's Sparrow in *Boone*, AR, stayed until 3 May (SR). Truly remarkable was a **Gray-headed Junco** photographed in *Caddo*, LA, 2–3 Mar (TD, PD et al.).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Cameron* 11 Mar was very early if a migrant. A Painted Bunting in *Lee*, AL, 29–30 Apr (SD) and one in *Oktibbeha* 13–22 May (DP, JPa, TS, MS) were unusual. A Bobolink in *Jackson*, MS, 13 Apr (CDe, m.ob., *fide* SJP), and ≤20 in *Boone*, AR, 25–26 Apr and 1 May (LB et al.) were record-early. Up to 35 Western Meadowlarks were present throughout the period in *Tunica*, MS, (JRW) and one was in *Panola*, MS, (JRW). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found in Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Tennessee. A Brewer's Blackbird at Ft. Pickens 16 Mar (WJB) was at an unusual location. Alabama's 18th Shiny Cowbird was at Dauphin I. 21–22 Apr (ph. JRW, KN). Unfortunately the Grand Isle area seems to be the epicenter for Shinies in this Region; reports spanned the period from 19 Mar (early) to 28 May (PAW, DPM, BMM, PY, m.ob.) and probably included at least 6 birds. Bronzed Cowbirds are, mercifully, also less common away from se. Louisiana, but one was in *Cameron* 29 Apr (DLD, SWC) and one was in *Hancock*, MS, 6 May (JBi, NM). A Baltimore Oriole in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA, 9 Mar (DFL) was extremely early if a migrant. One in *Oktibbeha* 24 Apr (TS, MS) was rather early and one in *Bolivar*, MS, 9 Apr (NHe) must have been early. The only Purple Finch reported was a male in *Shelby*, TN, 28 Mar (WRP). As of 15 Apr (BS), Red Crossbills were still in the Coleman L., AL, campground, where they

bred in 1988; two in *Lafayette*, MS, 24 Apr (GK) were more unusual.

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With increased pelagic coverage of the northern Gulf of Mexico, Leach's Storm-Petrel is proving to be rare but regular. This one was captured at an oil platform off Louisiana 12 May 2000 during Louisiana State University's on-going study of migration across the Gulf. Photograph by Karl Bardon